

# THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE HOLY COMMUNION

J. I. WEDGWOOD

A comment on the various theories held as to the nature and manner of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament and a treatment of the subject in the light of modern thought.

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# PRESENCE OF CHRIST THE HOLY COMMUNION

EXAMINATION OF CONFLICTING VIEWS AND  
A MODERN INTERPRETATION

By

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## INTRODUCTION

THE controversy which has arisen out of the new Anglican Prayer-Book has drawn public attention to the subject of the Holy Communion to a degree unprecedented in modern times. It has served to reveal how widespread is the ignorance which exists on the subject and how liable people still are to be affected in these matters by bias and prejudice. It has also brought home to us along what peculiar lines the religious sense of the average man travels.

Many churchwardens of my acquaintance would be a little hurt if you told them that they would have been just as good respectable Hindus if the accident of birth (so-called) had taken them to India. Yet the fact is so ; for numbers of people get their religious formation, just as they do their political affiliations, not from individual study and careful reflection at all, but from heredity, environment, custom and convention. Yet another large group makes its approach to religion indiscriminately through the emotions, to the almost entire exclusion of the mind. And so religion suffers in a peculiar way (if we except its fellow-victim, medicine) from the assumption that any one is competent to discuss it, whether he has received any education or training in the subject or not. In truth, religion is much at the mercy of popular trafficking. Hyde Park on a Sunday night in the summer, with its bevy of soap-box orators, does bend one's sympathies towards the old-fashioned Roman Catholic ideal that people should not be allowed to study the Bible for themselves until they are intellectually ripe enough to do so without danger of aberration.



People do not treat other sciences in the same ungracious way. Architecture, engineering, surgery, are all understood to require study and technical training. But the reason for this cavalier treatment of religion and medicine is obvious. "Every man his own theologian" and "Every man his own doctor" is a familiar attitude, because religion and medicine touch the life of the ordinary individual more directly and closely than do architecture or palæontology.

This little *excursus* into the religious psychology of the man-in-the-street has no more malice behind it than to point out that since religion does intimately concern every one, it merits all the more careful and detached consideration. As the Archbishop of York pointed out in the House of Lords, the really relevant question over the new Prayer-Book was, not whether the proposed changes were consistent with what is vaguely called "Protestantism," but whether they were consistent with the doctrines of the Book of Common Prayer. And there is more difference than is commonly realised between these two ideas, because the settlement that England made at the Reformation was very different from that reached on the Continent.

I have thought that it might be useful at the present time to bring into juxtaposition various ideas as to the nature and manner of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament. I propose to comment briefly on these theories, and then to treat the subject more freely in the light of modern thought. That last phrase is apt to sound trite, especially in association with theology where much that passes for Modernism consists only of very old ideas dressed up in modern clothes—for it is really remarkable how tendencies of thought which characterised the earliest centuries of Christendom tend to reincarnate as the years pass on. Still, it is evident that modern science has completely changed our outlook on the being of man and on the universe he inhabits. The Reformers do not talk the same language as Sir Oliver Lodge.

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His was the Word that spake it ;  
He took the bread and brake it ;  
And what that Word did make it,  
I do believe and take it.

*Attributed to Queen Elizabeth.*

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

THE best official definition of a Sacrament that I know is that given in the Church of England *Catechism* : " An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." This is a little more explicit than that of the Council of Trent (Roman Catholic), which defines the Sacraments as " outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification." In the Holy Eucharist the " outward and visible sign " is bread and wine ; and the " inward part or thing signified," to quote the Anglican *Catechism*, is " the Body and Blood of Christ." In Baptism the one is the washing with water ; the other the mystical washing away of sin and the descent of Divine Grace, the dew from heaven, whereby the child is grafted into the mystical body of Christ. In Ordination the outer form is the laying on of hands and the delivery of the instruments or insignia of the degree



bestowed ; the “inward and spiritual grace” is the “character”<sup>1</sup> conferred—or we might say, in the case of the Major Orders, the placing of the recipient in such agreed relationship with our Lord that he can be used as the instrument through which sacramental acts can be accomplished. It is Christ who is the true Minister of all Sacraments.

If we are to join issue with this definition at all, I should prefer to say that the Sacrament is the “inward and spiritual grace” rather than the “outward and visible sign,” or should, at any rate, cover both. From the standpoint of reality it is the outpouring of Divine Grace that is the essential feature, on the principle that man is a Spirit using a soul and a body, rather than a Body possessing a soul and a spirit. I know that in these days people hang on to the physical world like grim death as the one tangible reality. Man’s body is real enough to him, but the Spirit is to most people only vague hypothesis. Similarly, the outward and visible sign of the Sacrament is real and tangible ; but that which it presents is too often vague and intangible—quite nicely summed up in the word “spiritual,” which in common parlance means anything that we do not understand or know anything about.

Let us, however, pass on to consider in a few words the rest of the definition. It is not essential to our subject, but it summarises a good deal of interesting teaching. The grace is “given to us” ; it is a free gift of grace. That means that the spiritual blessing which comes to us through the Sacrament is not the proportionate remuneration of any personal effort on our part. Whatever aspiration a man addresses to God calls down its appropriate response. This would seem to be a law of the spiritual world—a law of

<sup>1</sup> In the theological sense, character is an ineffaceable mark or distinction impressed upon the soul by the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. It means that certain permanent changes are made by these rites in the inner nature of man. Hence, according to Western theology, it is a sacrilege to repeat these Sacraments, unless *sub conditione*.

nature, if we like, provided we understand that the laws of nature are the expression of God's will operative in His world. But the grace of the Sacraments is something higher than this, greater than we could earn or merit for ourselves. It is the gift of God through Christ ; not the response to man's aspiration, however much that may also be included in the process.

#### THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

The idea is important, because it explains the attitude of those who hold that the efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon their administration by one holding the Apostolic Succession of Orders. The idea—stated, if we may venture to do so, in modern language—is that our Lord instituted a certain arrangement according to which He could depend upon a number of instruments to be working in the world, through whom His especial blessing could be poured. For it is a principle in nature that a physical body is needed as a medium or vehicle if spiritual force is to be poured out on to the physical world—and so on at all levels of existence. Certain people offer and prepare themselves ; and by Ordination changes are effected in their inner being which place them in a special relationship with the Head of the mystical body, so that they can be used as instruments by Him. The “parson” means really the “person” (Lat. : *per* = through, *sona* = sound). The word has the same sense as when we speak of a Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the representative through whom the blessing of Christ may flow, for as before said, Christ is the true Minister of all Sacraments. These powers are given not for the priest's own personal enjoyment or aggrandisement, but that through him the flock of Christ may be fed. This doctrine outrages many people who are, not unreasonably, apprehensive of priestcraft. But they do not sufficiently realise, perhaps, that in the fulfilment of His scheme God is



dependent upon the co-operation of imperfect workers. The greater the blessing, the greater the risks by which any such arrangement is inevitably attended. And the arrangement works the more effectively, the more the priest can grow into the likeness of his Master. Arrogance and hypocrisy certainly lessen a man's spiritual influence, though they cannot interfere with that irreducible minimum of efficacy which unfailingly flows from the Christ, because His scheme takes into account less the natural imperfections of the instrument than the spiritual needs of the many to whom he is to minister. The effect, then, of Ordination is that the priest or bishop can be the channel for Christ's ministration of the Sacraments. Ministers of Churches which do not carry on this original institution receive their own blessing. But it may be thought of as being proportionate to the level of their own devotion and that of the congregation. They touch the consciousness of our Lord at that level, but not at the prime source, so to speak, and reinforced by that blessing do what they can—and often it is much. It is not, of course, for us to presume in such matters ; but the result does not seem to be at all the same thing as in those Churches which have preserved unbroken the Episcopal Succession and have thus adhered to the original arrangement.

That Ordination does effect such changes would, I think, hardly be doubted by bishops whose privilege it is to confer it, and by persons who receive it. I have myself received Ordination, of course, and during the twelve years of my Episcopate have consecrated bishops and ordained a good many priests—of some twenty-five different nationalities. I give my personal testimony for what it is worth. My own ordinations as priest and bishop respectively completely changed me, and gave me new powers of understanding ; and I have frequently noticed the same thing in those whom I have ordained.



## THE UNITY OF LIFE

The whole conception of the "free gift of grace" that we were discussing—the idea that it transcends anything in the nature of proportionate response to our own aspiration—turns on the conception of the Unity of Life. Similarly that of the Brotherhood of Man turns on the fact of the Fatherhood of God. There is a universal brotherhood of all that lives, because there is but One Life, the Life of God, which maintains all things. Man is a link in a vast chain of lives leading up from the lowest to the highest. And because of this unity of life we are all dependent the one on the other. That which helps one helps the whole, and that which harms one harms the whole body. Mutual help seems to be the law of progress in this brotherhood. As man helps those who stand below him on the ladder of evolution, so is he helped by those who stand above him. The care and the love that we bestow upon a dog, through which *quasi*-human qualities are developed in him, work a change greater than that which any dog could effect for himself. Applying the analogy to ourselves, we understand that our Blessed Lord, the "first among many brethren," is able to look back upon the world which He has transcended and pour out grace upon it in a manner made possible by His supreme sacrifice.

## ORDAINED BY CHRIST

To resume our definition : the Sacrament is "ordained by Christ Himself." People of a mystical turn of mind often use their language a little heedlessly. They speak of all life being "sacramental," which is true in the sense that all physical activities are a vehicle through which the spiritual element in man may be expressed. Life enacted in this way is lived on the sacramental principle or after the manner of a Sacrament. But when they go further and speak of a family meal as being a Sacrament, because the parent loves the



children and *vice versâ*, they are exaggerating. The Church reserves the word "Sacrament" for certain special rites in which the power of Christ is directly operative. These rites are so wonderful to those who understand anything about them, that we should be careful to safeguard the word.

The other two clauses of the definition can speedily be explained.

The Sacrament is the "means whereby we receive" the grace. That is plain. The grace comes through the Sacrament—through its outward and visible sign.

"A pledge to assure us thereof." The outward and visible sign, in the case of Holy Communion, by reminding us of the taking of physical sustenance, places our hearts and minds into accord with the idea of receiving our soul's sustenance. It is the physical token of the spiritual gift. By appealing to our senses it rightly orients our consciousness for attentive reception of the higher gift.



## CHAPTER II

# THE BABEL OF THEORIES

### A GLANCE AT EARLY HISTORY

Now that we have made this preliminary study of the ideas associated with the word "Sacrament," we can turn to the more important part of our inquiry.

It seems to have been accepted from the earliest Christian times that we receive in the Holy Eucharist a real Presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord Christ. The language of the Fathers is occasionally difficult, but on the whole it does not seem that in the main body of the Church there was any attempt to deny a real Presence until about the time of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> Luther indeed testified to the fact that all Christendom believed in it.<sup>2</sup>

I am not going to discuss the theory that sacramentalism is all a later importation into Christianity from the surrounding pagan worship. The theory is more in the nature of a glib attempt to account for facts uncongenial to its holders than adequately supported by historical documentation, nor does it appear to be taken seriously by the generality of good modern scholars. Indeed, Dr. Gavin in a work<sup>3</sup> which has just appeared has given the *coup de grâce* to this disingenuous theory. Nor need any attention here be

<sup>1</sup> But see the references to Scotus and Berengar occurring a little later.

<sup>2</sup> *Wider etliche Rottengeister*, 1532; quoted in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, art. "Eucharist," Vol. V., p. 578.

<sup>3</sup> *The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments*, by F. Gavin, Ph.D., Th.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, General Theological Seminary, New York. London, S.P.C.K., 1928.



given to that curious document, the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. This, when it was first discovered, was seized upon by "anti-sacerdotalists" as showing in an early community a "charismatic"<sup>1</sup> ministry of Teachers and Prophets, lingering on before being displaced by the later hierarchical organisation. Bishop Gore holds that it emanates from "some only half-Christian community," and entirely lacks the familiar atmosphere of the Gospels and St. Paul.<sup>2</sup> And the *Didache* is put into its right place for all time by that classic book, *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, edited by Dr. Swete.<sup>3</sup> These questions are those of early history and are not germane to our subject, which is the doctrine of the Eucharist as it has been held generally in the Christian Church.

To judge from the earliest fragments of history that come to us, the literal acceptance of the Real Presence seems to date from the beginning. It was a matter of simple faith, and the rite seems to have been regarded as very sacred. Presently there are attempts within the Church to explain the mystery, though these do not cast any doubt upon the fundamental fact of the Sacrament being the Body and the Blood of Christ. Later comes the thought that the bread and wine are still there in addition to the Body and Blood. Presently the idea of Transubstantiation seems to have emerged, according to which the appearances of bread and wine remain (the "accidents" or "species" as they are called), but their "substance" is converted into that of the

<sup>1</sup> Gr. charisma = gift. The *charismata* are gifts of grace given to individual Christians for special kinds of work—gifts of healing, of prophecy, of the discerning of spirits (cf. *I Corinthians* xii.). Nonconformists often claim, and quite rightly in individual cases, to have a "charismatic ministry," dependent upon individual sanctification and prophetic inspiration, as distinct from the Catholic idea of Orders, which is that of a ministerial office, whose ability to mediate grace is guaranteed by admission to office, rather than by individual merit or talents. The one idea is more impersonal than the other.

<sup>2</sup> *The Body of Christ*, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Macmillan, 1918.

Body and Blood of the Lord. In the ninth century Scotus Erigena is reputed to have opposed the doctrine of Transubstantiation, but it is not at all sure that he was not held responsible for a book by a monk named Ratram who lived in the same century. The matter is chiefly of importance because of a famous controversy which in the eleventh century centred around a Frenchman named Berengar, who claimed precedence for his views in Scotus. It is difficult to decide exactly what Berengar taught,<sup>1</sup> but it really is not of much importance, for he is mainly famous on account of the terms of the frightful recantation to which he was required to assent. Of this we will speak later. Even Wyclif, who in the fourteenth century denied Transubstantiation, seems to have set off against it a doctrine which allowed of the co-existence of the substance of the bread and wine with that of the Body and Blood of Christ, as did Luther. It was at the Reformation that discussion grew heated on the subject.

#### FOUR DIFFERENT VIEWS

In the year 1577 one Christopher Rasperger published at Ingolstadt a book rehearsing two hundred different interpretations of the Words of Consecration of the Eucharist. I do not propose to burden either the reader or myself with the tenour of this book, but mention the point to show how complicated is the thought of the period. Of the theories which have been propounded as to our Lord's relationship to the Holy Eucharist, the most important lend themselves to a fourfold classification.

<sup>1</sup> Some think that he was only protesting against a carnal Presence, but he was also accused of teaching that the bread and wine were bare signs. Bishop Forbes, in his *Explanation of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 537-545, describes him as "vain-glorious and dishonest," and tends rather to show that he was highly disingenuous in his conduct of the controversy he provoked. The Bishop is not alone in this verdict, for Bishop Gore, in *Dissertations*, p. 248, holds similar views. Berengar "was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made."



I. *The Real Objective Presence*.—The belief is that after the pronouncing of the Words of Consecration by a duly ordained priest or bishop, the Body and Blood of Christ are present on the altar under the veils of bread and wine.

Under this heading come three subdivisions.

(1) There are those who do not attempt to define the manner of the Presence. They speak of themselves simply as believers in the Real Presence.

(2) *Transubstantiation*.—The idea is that the substance of the bread and the wine is changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. The bread and wine remain unchanged as regard their “species” or “accidents,” but their “substance” is changed. Bishop Hedley puts the meaning of substance very clearly when he says that just as “substance” means the thing itself, so “species” means the thing as it affects the senses.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Church does not feel called upon to follow up the ephemeral vagaries of these new philosophical systems, but bases her doctrine on the everlasting philosophy of sound reason, which rightly distinguishes between the thing in itself and its characteristic qualities (colour, form, size, etc.). Though the “thing in itself” may ever remain imperceptible to the senses, and therefore be designated in the language of Kant as a *noumenon*, or, in the language of Spencer, the Unknowable, yet we cannot escape the necessity of seeking beneath the appearances the thing which appears, beneath the colour that which is coloured, beneath the form that which has form, *i.e.* the substratum or subject which sustains the phenomena. The older philosophy designated the appearances by the name of accidents, the subject of the appearances, by that of substance. It matters little what the terms are, provided the things signified by them are rightly understood. What is particularly important regarding material substances and their accidental qualities, is the necessity of proceeding cautiously in this discussion, since in the domain of natural philosophy the greatest uncertainty reigns even at the present day concerning the nature of matter, one

<sup>1</sup> Bishop J. C. Hedley, *The Holy Eucharist*, p. 39.

system pulling down what another has reared, as is proved in the latest theories of atomism and energy, of ions and electrons.<sup>1</sup>

(3) *Consubstantiation*.—This was the doctrine of Luther, who believed that the substance of the bread and wine remained, as well as the real Body and Blood of Christ in and under the bread and wine.

There are numbers of people unwilling to commit themselves to Transubstantiation, who hold that the substance of the bread and wine continues to exist side by side (without confusion or union of substance) with the substance of Christ's Body and Blood. Most of these would not care to use the term Consubstantiation, but would range themselves as believers simply in the Real Objective Presence.

II. *Receptionism*.—This doctrine is best described in the words of the Anglican divine, Hooker (1553-1600), "the Real Presence of Christ's most blessed Body and Blood is not therefore to be sought for in the Sacrament but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament."<sup>2</sup> Those who hold the doctrine in a positive sense deny any objective Presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

The consecration does not change the bread and wine, but attaches to them, not a presence, but a promise—the promise that when the communicant shall partake of the bread which has been blessed, he shall be a partaker of the Lord's Body. It is at the reception of the Sacrament that the communicant partakes of the Sacred Body and Blood, and then only by virtue of faith. Most Receptionists would add that he receives them not in a corporal or carnal manner; that the Presence is not to the elements at any stage, but to the soul of the receiver thereof.

III. *Virtualism*.—One of the problems which greatly troubled the Reformers was that of defining Christ's Presence

<sup>1</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopædia*, Vol. V., art. "Eucharist," p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V., lxvii.



according to the category of space. If His Body were in heaven, how could it be localised in the Sacrament? It was probably as a reaction to such questionings and in order to dissociate themselves from the idea of a carnal or corporal Presence that some thinkers developed the doctrine of Virtualism. Its distinguishing feature is that Christ's Body and Blood are not present in literal fact, but rather Their virtue and effect. There is no need, in this way, to maintain that the Sacrament presents either Christ's natural Body or His post-Resurrectional or glorified Body. This doctrine crops up with some regularity from the Reformation onwards. It seems to have been the final view of Archbishop Cranmer (1489-1556), and he maintained it in his famous *Answer to Stephen Gardner* (1551). He denied a corporal Presence in the communicant even after reception. And he distinctly asserts that Christ is no more "corporally or really present in . . . the Lord's Supper than He is in . . . Baptism." Waterland, a famous divine of the eighteenth century, maintained a form of Virtualism combined with Receptionism against Roman teaching, against Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Zwinglianism. Some of the Nonjurors appear to have held a Virtualism divorced from Receptionism.

Virtualism, though not identified as such, is probably held very widely at the present time by many who are reluctant to face the implications of the Real Presence—Eucharistic adoration, etc.—and hold to a "spiritual Presence," vague and undefined.

IV. *Zwinglianism*.—Zwingli (1484-1531) was the leader of the Swiss Reformation. He was opposed to Luther on many points, notably in regard to the latter's insistence upon an objective Presence in the Eucharist. The contention of Zwingli and his followers (often called the Sacramentaries, though the name was sometimes used to include those of Luther and others) was that the words "This is My Body" were figurative, just as other words of our Lord, "I am the

Vine," "I am the Door." The consecrated elements are figures or symbols of the Body and Blood. An act done in remembrance of Christ implies the bodily absence of Christ. There is no question of the elements being anything more than bread and wine. The rite is thus purely a commemoration of the Last Supper and of our Lord's death and crucifixion, in which Christians are exhorted to realise their fellowship with Christ and with one another. The Sacraments are signs or figures. The real Body of Christ is present by the contemplation of faith, and it consists of those who give thanks to God for the benefits conferred upon them by Christ, and who recognise that He took real flesh; that in it He really suffered, that He really washed away our sins by His blood, so that everything done by Christ becomes as it were present to them by the contemplation of faith. The bread is no more the Body of Christ than "if a wife, pointing to a ring of her husband which he had left with her, should say, 'this is my husband'." <sup>1</sup> The Sacraments bring and dispense no grace, but are a public testimony, the badge of our profession as Christians. There are, however, some passages in his writings which imply some fashion of feeding on Christ by the contemplation of faith. <sup>2</sup>

#### VIEWS OF OTHER REFORMERS

To complete our historical survey, it will be convenient, before discussing the different views here mentioned, to glance at the opinions of a few other leading Reformers.

Æcolampadius (1482-1531), a friend of Zwingli, definitely taught that the Supper was an external symbol, which the faithful should receive less for their own sakes than for the social example they set. <sup>3</sup> Bishop Forbes says that

<sup>1</sup> *Opera*, II., 293.

<sup>2</sup> The best account of the detailed teaching of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli in English is to be found in *The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, by the Rev. Alexander Barclay, B.D., Ph.D. Glasgow: Jackson, Wyllie & Co., 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, art. "Æcolampadius," Vol. XI., p. 213.



Œcolampadius "saw nothing more in the Eucharist than a symbol whereby one is bound to sacrifice for one's neighbour, after the example of Jesus Christ, one's body and blood, as baptism is a sign by which one binds oneself to give up one's life for the faith which one professes." <sup>1</sup>

Luther held that there was no option but to accept the Presence of the Body and Blood according to the plain statement of Scripture, and supported, as we have seen, the theory of Consubstantiation. He opposed the doctrine of Zwingli hotly, wherein he was supported by his friend Melancthon (1497-1560), who regarded it as "impious." Bucer (1491-1551) at times attacked both Zwingli and Luther, but tried to fill the roll of mediator between the two parties. "For a clear statement of doctrine," says his biographer in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, "he was ever ready to substitute vague formulas in the interest of unity, which even his able efforts could not establish among the Reformers." <sup>2</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that his statements appear obscure and contradictory. He appears to have held to some spiritual Presence in the Eucharist, but denies that "we here receive and possess Christ present in some manner of this world or enclosed in or joined together with the bread and wine or under their accidents in such a way that He ought to be adored and worshipped." <sup>3</sup> It would seem that he held the bread and wine to be unchanged; "the bread is shown and given to the senses, and at the same time the body of the Lord, that is, the communion of the Lord, is presented and given to faith." <sup>4</sup> To relieve him of political difficulties, Archbishop Cranmer invited Bucer to

<sup>1</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. III., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Concerning the Holy Eucharist*, 1550; quoted in *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, by Darwell Stone, Longmans, 1909, Vol. II., pp. 47-48. Dr. Darwell Stone's book cannot be too highly recommended. It is an excellent and unbiassed record of history.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. ad Michælem N. Hisp.*, quoted in Darwell Stone, Vol. II., pp. 45-46.

England in 1549, and seems to have been influenced not a little by his friend's views. Bucer was made Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, where he died shortly afterwards.

Calvin (1509-1564), who lived a generation later than Luther, occupied a position midway between the figurist school of Zwingli and what he considered the literalism of Luther. He teaches an extreme form of Receptionism together with a touch of Virtualism. He seems to hold that the elements of bread and wine are unchanged, and, as is only consistent with his theory of predestination and election, insists that faith is a necessary condition of reception—"for Christ to be received without faith is no more possible than for a seed to germinate in the fire."<sup>1</sup> Christ's Body is in heaven and nowhere else. "They locate Christ in the bread; while we deem it unlawful to draw Him down from heaven."<sup>2</sup> Hence he held that by the action of faith "a power emanating from the Body of Christ, which is now in heaven only, is communicated to the spirit"<sup>3</sup>; the faithful thus receive from heaven the efficacy of Christ's Body and Blood, whilst for others the Sacrament is only a bare symbol. The Dutch Hervormde Kerk, as well as the Gereformeerde Kerk, still hold to the Calvinist doctrine, though in their ordinary catechisms one misses the Virtualist element noted above.

#### THE ZWINGLIAN DOCTRINE

In discussing these different views, it will be more convenient to work backwards through them. We will begin therefore with Zwinglianism.

The answer that is most usually made to the Zwinglian view is one which is, it must be confessed, disarming—namely, to point out its improbability. Was our Lord likely at this most solemn moment of their affliction, before being

<sup>1</sup> Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV., xvii., 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 499.



parted from those who had faithfully served Him, to mislead the disciples deliberately by statements that none of them understood? The parallel between this utterance and that concerning the Door or the Vine is not convincing, the circumstances of the utterance being quite different. Here we have the bread and wine solemnly blessed and distributed to the disciples, but nothing of the sort happened in regard to a door. And it would seem strange that this signal misconception should have misled His entire Church until the Reformation. It seems quite plain that He meant this rite to be the means of His Presence, and the Church during the first centuries, and for long thereafter, took the same view. After all, it rests with any innovation in doctrine to win its own way: it has to prove its superiority. Zwinglianism was the outcome of a rationalising effort, but it fails to account for the remarkable change of consciousness or experience of spiritual things that overtakes so many people at the Eucharist. There is a widespread conviction against the "bareness," the "nudity," the "frigidity" of the doctrine, to quote descriptive words that are employed by writers of repute.

It must not be supposed, however, that the "Supper" lacks solemnity. Those who believe in the Real Presence naturally enough feel that their brothers who do not find themselves able to accept their own view miss a great deal in the way of opportunity and realisation. But in the Protestant Churches which have lost the Apostolic Succession of Orders, there is often intense religious feeling in connection with the Sacrament, even though in many Churches it is rarely celebrated. Moreover, Protestants, as well as Catholics, hold very strongly and often with touching devotion to the wonderful promise of our Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."<sup>1</sup>

The Zwinglian view is still widely held by Protestants on

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew* xviii. 20.

the continent of Europe. It has been held by many Non-conformists in England, but would certainly be rejected by many Presbyterians and Wesleyans in favour of Receptionism or Virtualism.

#### THE RECEPTIONIST THEORY

Receptionism also is an outcome of that rationalist influence which seeks to explain away the "miraculous" element involved in the theory of the Objective Real Presence. An inescapable part of the "miracle" is that of the changed lives and intense spiritual experience of which I have just spoken, and many people experience that before the objective Presence of the consecrated elements without receiving. It is really no mark of skill to say that "down here" in this world, of which we do know something, there just exist ordinary bread and wine and that in the spiritual or heavenly world, of which the ordinary man knows nothing, some mysterious process takes place. There is no explanation or consistent theory here at all. The difficulty has simply been burked by refusing to it any consideration in this world, and then referring the whole problem to a world of unknown character where it is left unsolved.

Receptionism became a favourite view amongst Anglicans in post-Reformation times, and is still widely held in the Anglican Church and elsewhere. Hooker, whose classic phrase was quoted in defining this particular doctrine, carefully abstained from indicating his own belief in regard to the objectivity of the Presence in the bread and wine. He has been claimed on both sides of the controversy. He wrote at a critical period of change and upheaval when, as he himself explained, "some did exceedingly fear lest Zwinglius and Œcolampadius would bring to pass that men should account of this Sacrament but only as a shadow, destitute, empty and void of Christ."<sup>1</sup> He saw signs of an earnest desire for

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity*, V., lxvii.



agreement and of its realisation, and his thesis was that people could unite on the simple minimum basis proposed by him.

But others had not the same laudable motive, and looked at from the point of view indicated above, the theory does become a mark of that timidity or even overt cowardice in religious matters with which Erastianism has infected the Anglican Establishment. The words of Bishop Forbes are not really too strong when one realises the ostrich-like policy underlying the Receptionist doctrine. Says Bishop Forbes, of Brechin :—

In England, in consequence of the great authority of Richard Hooker, who, in the gradual process of working himself out of Puritanism, had on this mysterious doctrine attained to Catholic feeling, while he adhered to Calvinistic definition, this view has obtained to an extent remarkable in view of its intrinsic inanity. It does not satisfy the letter of Scripture, which distinctly predicates the affirmative proposition, “*This is My Body.*” It contradicts the testimony of the primitive Church, as we shall presently proceed to show from a long catena of authorities. It has exhibited its unsatisfactoriness in never having been able to maintain an abiding existence, either rising into the Catholic doctrine, or, more commonly, degenerating into a bare Zwinglianism, and has only found favour with those who, unwilling to accept the profound mystery of the Holy Eucharist with all its consequences, are unable to bring themselves to an absolute denial of any presence of Christ, and, therefore, in this formula find a sop to the cravings of an intellect which dreads to carry to conclusions the premisses which in reason only lead to the acceptance of the Catholic doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Gore, whose trustworthiness as a scholar is everywhere acknowledged, says definitely that Receptionism is not the primitive doctrine.

But I do not think it is disputable that the church from the beginning did, as a whole, believe that the eucharistic elements themselves in some real sense became by consecration, and prior to

<sup>1</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

reception, the body and blood of Christ in the midst of the worshipping assembly.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to fix the exact meaning of the Church of England formularies as between the theories of the Real Presence and Receptionism. There are words employed which seem to suggest an objective Presence, whilst others seem partly receptionist. The Catechism says that the "inward part, or thing signified," is "the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." The use of the word "faithful" suggests a qualifying factor. It may be equivalent to worshipper, or it may be taken in the more likely sense of one having the requisite faith. The insistence on faith is probably due to Continental influence, and is perhaps linked up by implication with the succeeding Article Twenty-nine, which deals with the problem as to whether the wicked are partakers of Christ in the Sacrament or not. It implies that "the wicked and such as be void of a lively faith" receive the *figura* and the *res sacramenti*, i.e. the outward form and the inward reality of the Sacrament, but not the *virtus*, the moral effect of receiving it worthily, which is what is meant by being made partakers of Christ.

But the clause in the *Catechism* says that the Body and Blood of Christ are "verily and indeed *taken*," as well as "received." This seems to throw the balance of probability as to its meaning on to the side of an objective Presence, for according to Receptionist theories it is only at reception that what the communicant has been given becomes subjectively for him (i.e. usually for his soul) Christ's Body.

The Twenty-eighth Article of Religion is quite elusive :—

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

<sup>1</sup> *The Body of Christ*, pp. 93-94.



Here the word "given" seems to clinch the argument in favour of the objective view of the Presence. The concluding words of the first sentence are probably simply aimed against a carnal Presence, and would in that sense offend nobody. But the sentence can be taken two ways. It can mean that the Body is present in the bread after the manner of a spirit, and not carnally, or that it is present to our spirits only. In fact, Jeremy Taylor (Bishop of Dromore, 1661-1667) makes this distinction and says that the Anglican view is the latter one. If, however, we are discussing a process that takes place in heaven involving only the activity of our spirits, it seems odd to talk about eating the Body—this is a looseness of speech which Zwingli would never have tolerated; moreover, this conception is not really suggested by the general language of the Prayer-Book.

Lastly, the sentence in the Anglican Prayer of Consecration, "grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine . . . may be partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood," although it does precede the act of consecration, is evasive and characteristically leaves room for ambiguity.

It would seem, in fact, that the Anglican formularies were meant to be ambiguous, so as to permit of the Church accommodating people of different beliefs. Transubstantiation in the pre-Reformation, carnal sense is definitely ruled out. But the doctrine of the Real Presence can freely and lawfully be maintained in the Church of England. Archbishop Temple, of Canterbury, in a *Visitation Charge* delivered in 1898, definitely stated that "it is important that it should be clearly understood that it is not unlawful to hold and teach it within the Church of England." The question was also decided by the secular courts in the well-known case of Mr. Bennett, Vicar of Frome. He was prosecuted for such belief but upheld by the Court of Arches, in 1870, whose decision was confirmed on appeal by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1872.

Mr. Bennett's statement was :—

I am one of those who . . . myself adore, and teach the people to adore, Christ present under the form of bread and wine, believing that under their veil is the sacred body and blood of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

He spoke also of “ the real and actual Presence of our Lord upon the altars of our churches.”

Zwinglianism is condemned in Article Twenty-eight ; but Receptionism and Virtualism would be regarded as permissible in the Church of England.

To return to Receptionism. Faith is a word to which many meanings can be assigned. One does not take it in this connection to be the dutiful but uncomprehending acceptance of that which is taught by authority. One definition of a modern dictionary may well express the thought that may be applicable when we denote it as the means by which the underlying reality of the Sacrament is appropriate—namely, “ personal reliance on Christ, with surrender of the heart and will to His service.” The thought underlying this definition is extremely beautiful, but we may well challenge the general position, and whilst admitting that right disposition of the heart is in every way desirable, one cannot help recoiling a little from all this subjectivism, and asking why the reality of the Sacrament should thus be tied up with these subjective workings of the mind ? On this issue I cannot do better than add to what has been said by Bishop Forbes some penetrating remarks by another clear-headed and experienced theologian, the late Canon Malcolm MacColl, of Ripon :—

The Eucharist Presence is quite independent of the faith of the recipient. Faith creates nothing. Its province is not to create but to receive a gift external to it and offered to it. Faith is sometimes compared to an eye. But the eye does not create the light. It receives and transmits it to the brain and intellect. But a man may



injure his eyes, so that they cease to be accurate conductors to the soul. The vision is thus blurred and distorted. Or he may destroy his eyes altogether and then the whole realm of light, with all its entrancing visions, is shut out from the soul. But the light is there all the same. It embraces the blind man in its radiance, but can find no avenue into his soul, since he has destroyed his organs of vision. The light is there, but no longer for him. Yet it impinges on his blind eyes. It touches his optic nerve. But there is no response, for the organ of apprehension is gone. And this is true of all our senses; the function of each is to receive an impression, an impact from an external object charged with its appropriate virtue. And philosophers may discuss, and have discussed, whether the gift is in the external object or in the recipient of the impact; whether the sweetness is in the sugar or in the palate; whether the beauty is in the sunset or in the percipient mind. The sunset prints the same image on the eye of the brute as on the human eye; but there is no corresponding *res sacramenti*, if I may so express myself. For indeed Nature is a sacrament, as the old Fathers loved to think; "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual" Presence energising through all her operations and phenomena.

But however philosophers may dispute, we all agree that our bodily senses are our organs of communication with external facts, and that our sensations are no mere subjective impressions, but impressions resulting from contact with objective realities. The senses do not create the impressions. They only receive and convey them.

So with faith. It no more causes the Presence in the Eucharist than the eye causes the sunset. The Presence is objective—that is, outside of it and independent of it. If faith be lacking, the Presence has no more access to the soul than the glory of the setting sun has through sightless eyeballs. . . .

Thus we see that, alike in the Kingdom of Nature and of Grace, the Presence that nourishes the soul must be objective before it can become subjective.<sup>1</sup>

I will leave the Receptionist theory here, except to men-

<sup>1</sup> *The Reformation Settlement*, pp. 12-14. The author must make acknowledgment to this book as to an old friend who did much to shape his views more than twenty years ago.

tion that it is quite inadequate to serve as the basis of any substantial doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. And, since predestination and election are now dead issues, and the remainder of Calvin's contention is met by what has been said above, the peculiar views for which he was responsible can be dismissed from further consideration here. What more there is to diminish our liking for Receptionism is best elicited by discovering what more there is to be said in favour of a doctrine of a Real Objective Presence.

#### THE THEORY OF VIRTUALISM

This doctrine, as we have already seen, admits of a Presence of Christ—but of His Power and influence rather than of His Body, whether earthly or glorified and spiritual ; and this Presence is interpreted as objective by some, and after the manner of receptionism by others. The idea is well illustrated in a passage by one of the Nonjuring Bishops, Thomas Deacon (1697–1753) :—

It was at the institution of the Eucharist that our Saviour began to offer Himself to His Father for the sins of all men. . . . But because it would have been unnatural for Him to have broken His own body and shed His own blood, and because He could not as a living High Priest offer Himself when He was dead, therefore . . . He offered to the Father His natural body and blood voluntarily and really though mystically under the symbols of bread and wine mixed with water ; for which reason He called the bread at the Eucharist His body, which was then broken, given, and offered for the sins of many, and the cup His blood, which was then shed and offered for the sins of many. All the sacrifices of the old law were figures of this great one of Christ ; and the Eucharist or sacrifice of thanksgiving, which we celebrate according to His institution, is a solemn commemorative oblation of it to God the Father, and procures us the virtue of it.

Thus we see that by the consecration of the Eucharist the bread and mixed wine are not destroyed, but sanctified ; they are not changed in their substance but in their qualities ; they are not made



the natural but the sacramental body and blood of Christ ; so that they are both bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ at the same time but not in the same manner. They are bread and wine by nature, the body and blood of Christ in mystery and signification ; they are bread and wine to our senses, the body and blood of Christ to our understanding and faith ; they are bread and wine in themselves, the body and blood of Christ in power and effect. So that whoever eats and drinks them as he ought to do, dwells in Christ and Christ in him, he is one with Christ and Christ with him.<sup>1</sup>

I have little criticism to bring against such an exposition of Eucharistic doctrine. It seems to me extraordinarily sane, and extraordinarily lofty in tone and general conception—a refreshing change from most of the controversy. Such a view has in it everything that there is in Zwinglianism to recommend it, and supplies that warm conception of a direct life in Christ which Zwinglianism lacks. It is a bolder and more statesmanlike doctrine than Receptionism, and if it presumes a Presence it gives an interpretation of the bodily Presence which frees it from all grossness. Moreover, Deacon's bold conception of the Last Supper being the anticipatory offering of His Body, answers the objection made against Virtualism ; namely, how it explains the words "This is My Body *which is given for you*" and of the Blood "*which is shed for you.*"

But it does not clearly emerge whether a Presence is implied in this doctrine or not. The sense in which the elements are "the body and blood of Christ in power and effect" is obscure. Are they an especial channel of virtue (Lat. *virtus* = strength) or of the Presence, or only a reminder of that virtue which is available for us at all times through the sacrifice of Christ ? Virtualism, as generally understood, is a bestowal of the merits of the atoning death of

<sup>1</sup> *A Full, True and Comprehensive View of Christianity*, 1747 ; quoted in Darwell Stone, *op. cit.*, pp. 482-483. The author must express his indebtedness to Dr. Stone's excellent treatise for certain quotations.



Christ ; in fact, the bread and wine are equivalents for the absent Body and Blood. Still, amongst the Nonjurors a theory is to be encountered according to which the Holy Spirit descends upon the elements and by His action makes them in efficacy the Body and Blood. Johnson, the author of *The Unbloody Sacrifice*, who belonged to this school of thought, advanced this view. I shall attempt to show in the next chapter how this doctrine may, I think, legitimately be expanded and approximated to a view of Transubstantiation.

#### CONSUBSTANTIATION AND TRANSUBSTANTIATION

I have tried to keep the lines of our deliberation clear and free from entanglement with ultra-technical detail, and I do not think it necessary for our purpose to enter into any discussion on the respective merits of Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation. As a distinctive, self-contained theory, Consubstantiation seems to have missed fire, and has never reached anything like the same eminence as the rival doctrine of Transubstantiation. Two schools of thought had existed from the fourth and fifth centuries. From one school the doctrine of Transubstantiation was developed—the substance of bread and wine, they said, was changed or converted into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. The other school tried in their conception of the mystery to maintain a parallel with the doctrine of the Incarnation. As our Lord by His Incarnation became both God and Man, each nature existing side by side and unchanged, so in the Eucharist, they submitted, the bread and wine continue to exist side by side with the Body and Blood of Christ.

Luther himself was persuaded of the necessity of accepting our Lord's words in their literal sense, and taught what he called Consubstantiation, meaning simply that the bread and wine remained also in the Sacrament. The various Lutheran Confessions of Faith which were drawn up at the time, like



those of Augsburg and Württemberg, contented themselves with affirming the dual Presence, but do not speak of Consubstantiation. Moreover, Luther was not always quite guarded in his utterance, and his opponents accused him through his doctrine of various heresies like Impanation and Monophysitism, implying that Consubstantiation involved the idea that the bread and wine and the Body and Blood respectively became merged into one substance, just as the Monophysite or Eutychian heresy thought that after the Incarnation our Lord had but one nature. Luther was not an expert metaphysician, and made no serious attempt to define his doctrine of Consubstantiation. In fact, he deprecated on occasion any such tendency. In consequence of all this, Consubstantiation has never been a living factor in subsequent theology. Many theologians who hold that view of the Real Presence, mentioned just above, which is parallel with the doctrine of the Incarnation, would hesitate to describe it by the name of Consubstantiation.

The events of the Reformation led to what is called the Counter-Reformation in the Roman Church, and to that interesting and vastly important gathering called the Council of Trent, which did so much to purge Catholic teaching of mediæval superstition and excess, and gave some most admirable dogmatic definitions. Amongst these latter are some on Transubstantiation. I quote from Bishop J. C. Hedley's <sup>1</sup> standard work on *The Holy Eucharist* :—

There are two principal passages which concern us in that Council's Decrees and Canons :

The first is from Session XIII., cap. IV. : " Seeing that Christ our Redeemer hath said that that which He offered under the appearance (*specie*) of Bread was truly His Body, therefore it hath ever been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Synod declares it afresh, that there happens a conversion (*conversionem fieri*) of the whole substance of the bread into the substance

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Hedley was Roman Catholic Bishop of Newport.

of the Body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood; which conversion conveniently and with propriety is called by the holy Catholic Church Transubstantiation."

The second is from the first Canon or definition of the same chapter: "If any one shall deny that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist is truly, really, and substantially the Body and Blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore Christ wholly and entirely (*totum Christum*); but shall say that it is therein only as a sign, or figuratively, or virtually; let him be anathema." And Canon II. of the same chapter declares: "If any one shall say that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there remains the substance of Bread and Wine, together with the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of bread into the Body and of the whole substance of wine into the Blood, the species only of the bread and wine remaining—which conversion the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation—let him be anathema."<sup>1</sup>

These definitions are clear and to the point, and it is evident that they were made in reply to the "Sacramentaries," as the schools of Zwingli and Calvin were called. The statement that our Lord is "truly, really and substantially" (*vere, realiter, essentialiter*) present opposes the doctrines of Zwingli, Œcolampadius and Calvin. "Truly" is directed against Zwingli's idea that the Sacrament is a "sign" (*signum*) only, a sign or token by which a man is known as a Christian among his fellows; "really" against Œcolampadius who held the rite to be a figure; and "substantially" against Calvin who denied the objective Presence, but admitted an efficacy of grace limited to the predestined.

Amongst those who in these days accept the doctrine of the Real Objective Presence and are outside of the Roman Catholic Church, there is a general tendency not to make the question of Transubstantiation a matter of faith on the one

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 37, 38.



hand, or of controversy on the other. Bishop Gore, who has objections to it, admits that as conceived by the Council of Trent—

it remains as little more than a verbal incumbrance due to an inopportune intrusion into church doctrine of a temporary phase of metaphysics.<sup>1</sup>

Theologians of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, though often by no means antagonistic to Transubstantiation, refrain from insisting upon any such precise definition of the mode of the Presence, and ask only that a *Metousiosis*, a change or transmutation shall be acknowledged.<sup>2</sup>

There can be no doubt that it was against the conception of a carnal presence in the Eucharist that the Reformers protested, and it is certainly in that sense that the disavowal of Transubstantiation in Article Twenty-eight of the Church of England is to be understood. Transubstantiation as defined by the Council of Trent does not “overthrow the nature of a Sacrament,” as is said in the Article. That there was much that was revolting in the pre-Tridentine teaching, and that many abuses and much superstition existed is evident from the literature of the period. Says Jeremy Taylor :—

And, by the way, let me observe that the expressions of some chief men among the Romanists are so rude and crass . . . they thought Christ intended they should tear Him with their teeth and suck His blood . . . ”<sup>3</sup>

Archbishop Ussher mentions the legend of “a Roman matron who found a piece of the sacramental bread turned into the fashion of a finger, all bloody ; which afterwards, upon the prayers of St. Gregory, was converted to its

<sup>1</sup> *The Body of Christ*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> This view is very clearly exposed in Canon J. A. Douglas' excellent book on *The Relations of the Anglican Churches with the Eastern Orthodox*.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, VI., 28.



former shape again.”<sup>1</sup> Other instances of gross superstition will be found in Bishop Cosin’s treatise against Transubstantiation, and in the well-known book, *Church of Our Fathers*, written by a learned Roman Catholic, Dr. Rock.

We have already referred to the case of Berengarius. After his little excursion into free-thinking he was forced to make a recantation to the following effect :—

the bread and wine which are placed on the altar are after consecration . . . the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that with the senses (*sensualiter*), not only by way of sacrament but in reality (*sed in veritate*), these are handled by the hands of the priest and broken and bruised by the teeth of the faithful.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Gore describes this as “a gross and horrible doctrine,” adding that—

most of the contemporary writers against Berengar assert that the body and blood of Christ are to be eaten and drunken “with the mouth of the body as well as the mouth of the heart”; and, like some of the earlier Greeks, they deny that the elements after consecration retain their natural properties of nourishing or becoming corrupted or being digested. . . . Miracles were recklessly postulated, and it was sufficient objection to any more reasonable treatment of the mystery that in diminishing the difficulty of belief it reduced the merit of faith.<sup>3</sup>

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An earlier book by Paschasius Radbert leaves no doubt as to the nature of the doctrine that was prevalent. In his *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (831) he writes that the bread is converted into “the very body which was born of Mary, was crucified, and rose from the tomb”; and this book was later defended by Lanfranc in his attack on Erigena and Berengarius.

<sup>1</sup> *Answer to a Jesuit, Works, IV.*, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Dr. Darwell Stone’s *History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, Vol. I., p. 247. The Latin is given in Bishop Gore’s *Dissertations*, pp. 257–258. According to Dr. Stone, Lanfranc says that Berengar subscribed this statement; Berengar says that he only accepted it in silence.

<sup>3</sup> *The Body of Christ*, pp. 117–118.



All this has to be realised if we are to understand why the English Reformers wrote so strongly against Transubstantiation, as they understood it. The same considerations explain much of their hostility to the Mass and other "Romish doctrines."<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that many abuses had sprung up in connection with the Mass. Pilkington, Bishop of Durham (1520-1575),

incidentally lets out one of these abuses : when the accusation was brought that the Mass had been changed ; he answers that it was only restored to what it was intended to be, a religious rite for the benefit of men's souls (and therefore to what the Missal contemplated), and not "for pocky pigs, scalled horses, or scabbed sheep,"<sup>2</sup>

referring to the custom of driving cattle into church at the last gospel to be cured of their diseases. Bishop Forbes refers to the Synod of Rome of 648, where the Host was mixed with ink for the purpose of signing the condemnation of the Monothelite heretics.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE EPIKLESIS

Before closing this chapter it may not be out of place to say a few words on the question of the *Epiklesis*, or invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements. This feature is prominent in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, which is that chiefly in use in the Eastern Orthodox Church. In that rite the priest, having recited the words of institution, prays God "to send down Thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts." He then prays in a low voice that the Bread and Wine may be made the Precious Body and Blood, and

<sup>1</sup> See Article Twenty-two of the Thirty-Nine Articles in the Anglican Prayer-Book. The Latin word used, *Romaniensium*, has a technical meaning. It does not mean simply Roman Catholic, but was used by Luther and others to designate the extreme mediæval party. "Romish" doctrines is therefore a distinction from "Roman Catholic" doctrines, and a vast amount of Protestant diatribe and innuendo results from ignorance of this careful distinction.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Lunn's Preface to his edition of *Barlowe's Dialogue*.

<sup>3</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 551.



adds the words "changing them by Thy Holy Spirit." It is held by some that this form of Eucharistic consecration is older than that of the West, which uses our Lord's words of institution. Authorities seem to be divided on the subject. It certainly goes back to the fourth century and is claimed for the third. It has been claimed that in at least one very early form the "Spirit" invoked is not the Third Person, but the Divine Power or Virtue. It seems probable that different methods were in use from quite early times, and we have evidence of different customs according to which the words of institution were employed, the Word invoked, the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Trinity. In any case, in those days the idea was vividly before the minds of all that all Christian worship was "in the Holy Spirit."

The proposed introduction of the *Epiklesis* into the new Book of Common Prayer raises the question as to where the consecration takes place. Do the words of institution effect consecration or is it now the Invocation of the Holy Spirit? The Eastern Church came gradually to believe the latter, and regards the formula of institution as historical narrative. But in the fourth century the belief was widely held that consecration was effected by the words of institution. St. John Chrysostom taught this, as also St. Ambrose. The words of our Lord were "caught up by His Church," as it has strikingly been said, "and reiterated in each Eucharist still in their ancient power. What Christ did at the Institution, He does at every Eucharist." The one doctrine prevailed in the East, the other in the West. We need not enter into any discussion as to which is true, for certainly both are effective. The probability is that in the Eastern rite the words of our Lord inaugurate the process of change, which is carried a stage further at the succeeding words and at the *Epiklesis* brought out into full expression. Precision in regard to time and space is a mark of our modern Western civilisation. Formerly, the rite was considered more in its entirety.



It is commonly surmised that a number of different reasons lay behind this introduction of the *Epiklesis* into the alternative Prayer-Book. It may be taken as a move in the direction of the Eastern Church, and, contrariwise, as a veiled rebuff to Rome. Some suppose that a little pride of scholarship was behind the idea of reverting to a supposedly more primitive form. The Anglican Bishop of Gloucester, Dr. A. C. Headlam, pointed out in a letter to *The Times* that the Prayer of Consecration in the older Prayer-Book

lays the whole stress on the words of institution, and is quite clearly open to the interpretation that the priest by the recitation of these words has the power to produce the Body and Blood of Christ. That is the extreme Roman point of view, and is exactly what appears to many of us so dangerous, perhaps almost open to the charge of being magical. The new Canon emphasises the point that the gift, however it may be defined, comes through Divine action in response to the prayers of the Church offered through its officiating minister.<sup>1</sup>

One wonders sometimes what is the state of mind which allows an Anglican prelate to write this kind of nonsense about Roman Catholics. Dangers there may be—and I think there are—attached to Romanism, but they are more worthy of their salt than that of supposing that a priest is going to get sufficiently conceited to think that he effects the consecration of the Host himself. The Bishop, to begin with, ignores the fact that the existing Anglican Prayer-Book prefaces the words of institution with a prayer to the Father which obviously enlists His action. But apart from that, the insinuation of the letter is an audacious and very disingenuous travesty of Roman doctrine. No priest of any denomination can for an instant suppose that he is acting apart from the Christ who is the True Minister of all sacraments. Moreover, if “magic” is to be brought into the arena, is it not just as much a magical operation that the

<sup>1</sup> Letter, February 16th, 1928.

invocation of the Holy Spirit should be supposed to affect the bread and wine as the use of Christ's words of institution. I shall speak later of this curious craze for dubbing everything that is disliked or misunderstood as "magical," but the Bishop is surely using dangerous weapons. The late Dr. Parker, the famous Nonconformist preacher of the City Temple, declared that the Anglican Prayer-Book was steeped in Popery, and would no doubt have convicted Dr. Headlam of magic no whit less than the latter insinuates it against Rome.

The Liberal Catholic Liturgy has a form of *Epiklesis* preceding the words of institution :—

Wherefore, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, we pray Thee to look down on and accept these offerings, which we, Thy servants, and Thy whole household do make unto Thee, in obedience to the command of Thy most blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ ;

Which offerings do Thou, O Father, deign with Thy Holy Spirit and Word to ✠ bless, ✠ approve, and ✠ ratify, that they may become for us His most blessed ✠ Body and ✠ Blood.



### CHAPTER III

## AN INTERPRETATION

I WANT now to leave the beaten tracks of theology and to look at the whole question in a freer spirit. Our conception of the universe is different from that which prevailed in the days of the Schoolmen and the Reformers. The last century—"the wonderful century," as Alfred Russell Wallace pertinently called it—so rich in discovery of all kinds, has displaced our landmarks of thought and our psychology moves in quite a new orbit.

Much of the difficulty which has dogged the Eucharistic doctrine has centred round the use of the terms "Body" and "Blood." It does not seem likely that the disciples in the presence of His living Body would take the bread that He gave them at the Last Supper as His physical flesh. The Eucharist cannot be considered apart from the mystic discourse related in *John vi.*, when the Jews of Capernaum had been asking of Him a sign, pointing out how God had sent down manna in the desert to feed the wandering Hebrews. He tells them that "the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews, we are told, strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat ?" And many of His disciples said, "This is a hard saying. . . ." And again "many of them went back and walked no more with him." But it was this moment of stress which opened



the eyes of Simon Peter, who uttered the significant confession : " And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

The whole of this discourse is cast in terms of mysticism. The supposed miracle of the manna is dismissed, and He speaks of a mystical sustenance through which they draw their spiritual life from Him, even as He lives by the Father who sent Him. This was not the only occasion on which He spoke to them in this strain. Later on in St. John's Gospel He spoke of Himself as the " true Vine," and gave them the beautiful simile of themselves related to Him as the branches <sup>1</sup>—and this just before He told them " a little while and ye shall not see me." <sup>2</sup> They would by the time of the Last Supper be familiar with this doctrine of their mutual spiritual dependence.

Calvin speaks very reasonably on this spiritual nourishment :—

But to me Christ appears to have intended something more express and sublime in that famous discourse of His, where He commends to us the eating of His Flesh ; namely, that by a real participation of Him we be quickened ; which He therefore designated under the words eating and drinking, lest any should think that the life we derive from Him is received by simple cognition. For as, not the sight, but the eating of the bread, gives nourishment to the body, so is it needful that, for the soul to be wholly partaker of Christ, it should be quickened by His virtue to life eternal.<sup>3</sup>

There is nothing strange or novel in the teaching. St. Paul told the men of Athens that in God " we live, and move, and have our being . . . for we are also his offspring." <sup>4</sup>

And does not the Apocalypse exhibit to us the symbolism

<sup>1</sup> *John* xv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xvi. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Institut. IV., xvii., 5. Quoted in Bishop Harold Browne's *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 703.

<sup>4</sup> *Acts* xvii. 28.



of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the birth of Christ in Eternity, the Life of the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity poured out into His world, the Eternal Sacrifice by which the world is ever nourished and sustained.

I bring forward these different considerations because it seems quite clear to me that our Lord intended His Presence in the Eucharist to be understood as an objective spiritual Presence, that of His all-sustaining Life, made manifest in a special way, and that the disciples must have regarded it as such.

#### THE MEANING OF "BODY" AND "BLOOD"

How, then, are we to explain the use of the words "Body" and "Blood"? What is a body? What is your body or mine? A body may be defined as "a vehicle of consciousness or life." My physical body is my instrument of communication with the physical world. I receive through it impacts from the world which, translated into terms of consciousness, become experiences; and I express myself through it into the external world. Moreover, the word has also an extended sense. We speak of the body-politic, organised society; of the body-corporate, acting as a single entity; of the *corpus juris*, the body or code of the laws. It means in this sense a system or an organised collectivity.

Is not entirely the same idea applicable to the Sacrament? Is not the holy Bread the Body of the Lord in the sense that It is His vehicle or instrument of consciousness, the medium or channel through which His Life and blessing are communicated to us?

What then shall we say of the Blood? In the sacrificial systems and mystery-cults of the past special significance has usually been attached to the blood of the victim. There is a reference to this in Leviticus xvii. 11: "For the life of the body is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the

altar to make an atonement for your souls," and the text goes on to forbid the partaking of blood by the children of Israel and by the strangers sojourning amongst them. It would seem that in the Israelitish cult, as in other cults, the blood represented the being of the person, and that our Lord spoke really their own language to the Jews of Capernaum. Ideas of this sort abound in the various works on folklore and comparative mythology. Further, there is a connection between the blood and wine. In the Mysteries of Bacchus, which later developed into frenzied orgies but were in the beginning probably quite pure and lofty, the juice of the grape was the emblem of the Life of the Logos poured out in sacrifice, and as sacrifice in its highest aspect is joyous and glad, great mirth and rejoicing were associated with their celebration. This symbolism runs through a good many cults, for the great Sacrifice of the Logos is the Life-blood of the world, and Christ is its heart.

It is the idea of the primal Sacrifice of the Logos which enables us most clearly to understand how the Holy Eucharist is also a Sacrifice. The primal Sacrifice takes place in the "Eternal Now," outside of our conceptions of time and space. And as in earthly time Christ became incarnate for our sakes, so is the Mystery of the Incarnation extended in every Eucharist. The primal Sacrifice was His own Self-limitation in matter ; in the Eucharist correspondingly He is at once Priest and Victim. He is continually becoming incarnate for us in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist "we not only commemorate in symbol that Eternal Oblation, but verily we take part in it, and perpetuate thereby within the limitations of time and space, which veil our earthly eyes from the excess of His glory, the enduring Sacrifice by which the world is nourished and sustained." <sup>1</sup>

Our Lord spoke once, we are told, of having other sheep and other folds ; and the student of comparative religion

<sup>1</sup> From the Liberal Catholic *Liturgy*.



finds many likenesses between the great religions of the world. It is difficult to suppose that these can all be due to plagiarism or mutual influence, otherwise other religions must have plagiarised from Christianity by anticipation—as, indeed, certain of the Fathers frankly maintained. The impartial student is forced to the conclusion that there are certain basic truths and foundation symbols and myths common to them. There seems no real evidence for the theory which is from time to time advanced that the Christian Sacraments, as we know them, were incorporated into the faith at a later period, and taken over from the mystery-cults of the Mediterranean basin. There seems much evidence, on the contrary, that some of the foundations of the Eucharist are to be found in the Jewish tradition.<sup>1</sup> But are we to think that our Lord is and was a stranger to all that was taking place in other great religions of the world? People are wont in these days to say that the different nations worship the same God, whether one calls Him Allah and the other Ahuramazda. Do they not perhaps also worship the same Christ? Be all this as it may, it is not unreasonable to suppose that our Lord in His wisdom may have seen fit to carry into this new religious impulse something of the same symbolism that appeared elsewhere, and to adapt it to His own special purposes.

I take the bread, then, to be His Body in the sense that a body is a vehicle of life, and the wine to be His Blood in the sense that blood and wine are ancient symbols of the Divine Life poured out in sacrifice for the sustenance of the world. There is no carnal or fleshly significance to be attached to these terms. The bread and wine are not mere figures. The Presence is objective and real. It reaches people through their faith and devotion; but its objective reality on the altar under the forms of bread and wine is an objective reality and is not dependent upon the subjective

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Gavin, *op. cit.*



attitude of one or more worshippers. The outer forms of bread and wine are the vehicle through which that Presence can become manifest.

The infinite advantage of this interpretation is that we are at once disembarassed of all the complications associated with ideas of the Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the ordinary sense of the words. We have seen with what difficulties the doctrine has become entangled. First there has been the widespread revolt against the corporal or carnal Presence. Theologians one after another have insisted that the Body in the Sacrament is the spiritual, or glorified and risen Body of Christ. But they have had no explanation to offer as to why a spiritual or heavenly Body should be given to be eaten any more than a carnal Body. In the later definition of Transubstantiation the substances of the bread and wine are changed not into the Body and Blood of Christ, but into the substance of His Body and Blood. Then, Calvin insisted that Christ's Body is in heaven. So does the Black Rubric, so-called, at the close of the Anglican Communion Office. It tells us that Christ's "natural Body and Blood" are "in heaven and not here," and that It cannot "be at one time in more places than one." Others make a distinction between this "natural" Body and the "glorified" Body. The Anglican Article Twenty-eight approaches the question from another angle, and directs attention not so much to the nature of the Body, as to the manner of eating It—"a heavenly and spiritual manner." The view which I have been advocating bears with it a sense of relief. We can disencumber the question of all this literalism as to the nature and habitat of Christ's Body, and it leaves us none the less with the full doctrine of the real and objective Presence.

#### LOCALISATION OF THE PRESENCE

This view of the function of the bread and wine relieves us of any difficulty in regard to the localisation of the Body



of Christ, which was one of the great points of contention among the Reformers. Luther took a definite view as to the ubiquity of our Lord. Where He is as God, says Luther, He is also as man, and where His manhood is there must His Body be. Since He is omnipresent as God, so also is His Body. This doctrine which gives to Christ's manhood the same properties as to His Divine Person is rejected, however, by many, and regarded as a *communicatio idiomatum*. Calvin, as we have seen, took a different view. Christ's Body is in heaven and cannot be elsewhere. "The Calvinistic doctrine regarding the Lord's Supper rests upon an overt principle of dualism between the kingdom of grace and that of nature; a dualism so thorough that the Lord's Supper is literally divided into two distinct acts, the one in heaven, the other on earth."<sup>1</sup>

There can be no objection on principle to the idea of a localised Presence. Christ's Presence was certainly localised, by comparison with His universal Presence, when He moved as a man amongst men. To say that He is present in the Bread does not assert, as some take for granted, that He is enclosed and wholly imprisoned therein. He can be at once transcendent and immanent in regard to His vehicle, as God is in regard to His universe. Once we unburden ourselves of the theory that Christ has but one Body which is in heaven, and that it is this Body which is given in the Eucharist, we are loosed from all sorts of difficulties. The Host is thus *a* Body rather than *the* Body. He may have Bodies upon a thousand altars simultaneously, for His consciousness is omnipresent. This may have been a difficult doctrine for the sixteenth century; it is less so for us who know that the human voice is made well-nigh ubiquitous—present at any rate in thousands of places simultaneously—by radio-telephony. That He Who is omnipresent should be able to make manifest His Presence when we on our sides prepare the requisite apparatus—in the way of conditions—is really

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 441.

not so startling. There can be, and are, degrees of His Presence, that is to say, of the manifestation of His Life. In some *people* "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" <sup>1</sup> is heavily veiled within its encasement of matter ; in others It has begun to shine out into the world resplendently. Centuries upon centuries ago in the Mysteries of ancient Egypt, our forefathers taught the same idea in the legend of the breaking and scattering of the limbs of Osiris and their eventual reintegration. So the seed of Divinity is scattered over the world and dwells in every human heart. Mankind lives in illusion and separateness, until man awakens the Light within so that it becomes one with the Universal Light without, and man is reintegrated consciously into the mystical Body of our Lord. And our Lord is ever thus scattering the fragments of His Life upon the altars of His holy Church, that we, participating in that Life, may quicken and fan within us the flame of our inner Divinity.

#### A LIBERAL VIEW OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION

What then are we to think of Transubstantiation ? There need be no difficulty in accepting it, if our philosophy of the cosmos is a spiritual one. By that I mean the following : The whole universe is an expression of God. He is the One Existence from Whom all other existences are derived. " In Him we live, and move, and have our being." <sup>2</sup> His is the One Life which animates everything. I know no better statement of the Divine Transcendence and Immanence than that magnificent proclamation of one of the Hindu Scriptures :—

I established this universe with one fragment of Myself ; and I remain.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *John* i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Acts* xvii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad-Gita*, X., 42.



Man, made in the Image of God, is himself divine in essence, a spark of the Divine Fire. The Divinity that was fully manifest in Jesus Christ is being gradually unfolded in man, until he shall come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."<sup>1</sup> The Spirit uses a soul and a body, for contact with the various worlds of being, through which the man gains experiences, and these have the effect of bringing gradually out into manifestation the divine powers latent in him.

On this philosophy the world consists of various planes of being, reaching from the most spiritual (nearest to the primal Reality) to the most material, the physical world. All forms owe their existence to the Life of God which he breathed into His universe. If that Divine Energy were for a moment withdrawn, all would be resolved back into no-being. At creation there was a differentiation into a fundamental duality of Spirit and Matter—the Life which God breathed out and that substratum of matter into which He breathed it. The planes can be looked upon as material, but instinct with life, the matter becoming subtler and finer as we move upwards from the physical, the densest.

According to this philosophy, "substance" is the reality, or force, or ensouling Life, or *noumenon*, which lies behind a physical object (Latin, *sub* = under ; *stans* = standing), that which stands under or behind the outer physical object, and of which the object is the expression or epiphany. Transubstantiation (Latin, *trans* = across), on this principle, means that the essence, or substance, or superphysical reality and counterpart and creative force, of the bread and wine is transmuted, or changed across, and is replaced by a similar ensouling Life, but a Life now coming directly from Our Lord Himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ephesians* iv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> In *The Science of the Sacraments*, by Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, a most interesting work, the theory is more fully elaborated.

To put the matter into quite simple language : the consecrated Bread and Wine become a vehicle or channel directly connected with Our Lord, through which He expresses His Life and blessing. Because His Life, the Life of the Second Person of the Trinity, is in every man, so every man (though in lesser degree) is also a vehicle of Him. And the purpose of the Sacrament is to quicken within us the manifestation of His Life, so that our efforts towards self-realisation may be aided.

This view of Transubstantiation or of the Real Presence rids us of a host of difficulties which have intrigued theologians. The words "symbol" and "figure" no longer have the negative sense of denying reality. On the contrary, a symbol is a "correspondence" (Gr. *sumbolon* = throwing together), a correspondence between a physical object and a superphysical archetypal Idea, of which the object is the channel or vehicle or direct expression.



## CHAPTER IV

### MATTER THE VEHICLE OF SPIRIT

IF there is one thing which strikes one all through the history of opinion in regard to the Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, it is the constant endeavour to divorce the thought of Christ's Presence from all association with material objects. The *modus operandi* is to claim that the Presence is "spiritual" and to protest that the idea is being "materialised" the moment we begin to talk of a Real Presence in the consecrated bread and wine. This tendency, as we have already pointed out, is partly the outcome of rationalism and partly symptomatic of the timidity in religious matters which is characteristic especially of Anglican officialdom. The word "spiritual" is like the blessed word "Mesopotamia": it is comforting because it enables us to evade issues. The issue is avoided on this physical plane and transferred to a spiritual realm of which anything convenient may be predicated.

The exponents of this doctrine could with some profit consult the writings of Zwingli, who was under no illusion about its merits. He writes :—

To be a body and to be eaten after a spiritual manner are inconsistent with one another, for body and spirit are so different that, whichever you take, the other cannot be.

They say, We adore and eat the spiritual body of Christ. What, by Great Jupiter, is the spiritual body of Christ? Is any other spiritual body of Christ anywhere found in Scripture than either the Church . . . or our faith? . . . A spiritual body is just as

much understood by a human being as if you spoke of a bodily mind or a fleshly reason.<sup>1</sup>

It would not seem generally to be realised that this attitude is also the perpetuation of an old heresy as variegated as the chameleon—the *assumption that matter is evil*. Amongst other things of which they were falsely accused, the early Gnostics were, rightly in all probability, convicted of this error. Religiously-minded people are apt to be frightened of matter, instead of realising it as the vehicle of spirit. Thus to divorce the two, does not in reality make for a more spiritual view of religion as they fondly imagine, but is, on the contrary, a proclamation of materialism. It is an attitude which has led either to Puritanism, in which matter is reprobated as evil, as something which has to be combated and avoided, or to a view of civilisation based on Positivism, and shut off from religious and spiritual considerations. The Protestant temperament is reluctant to face the issue that material objects are constantly used as instruments for spiritual manifestation. Thus the Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, has lately been flooding with contemptuous ridicule the idea that it is possible to invest material objects with spiritual properties. In the first place, however, the old idea that matter belongs to the category of either “animate” or “inanimate” is fast losing ground with scientists. The researches of Professor Sir J. C. Bose, of Calcutta, communicated on various occasions to the Royal Society, have established a strong premise that there is no such thing as “inanimate matter,” as Dr. Bose’s ancestral Scriptures—for he is a Hindu—claimed thousands of years ago. He has recorded the result of electrical stimulation on metals; and has shown, for example, that they are subject to fatigue, can be poisoned, and can be restored to normal activity by the administration of an antidote.

<sup>1</sup> *Opera*, II., pp. 206, 215.



Secondly, there is now a fair amount of evidence for the existence of the gift called psychometry. Country folks will often tell one of horses which shy at some spot on the road where a nasty accident has once taken place or which is the scene of some memorable event. Events seem to leave their impressions upon the surrounding matter or "æther." The objects that we wear become impregnated with our "magnetism." Who has not heard of the old trick by which a hypnotist endows water with purgative or other medicinal properties by pouring his "animal magnetism" into it? And can it not truthfully be said that the "magnetism" or "atmosphere" of a speaker or musician is transmitted by "radio"? A Church service broadcast by "radio" can certainly produce religious sentiment; and this is not entirely due to subjective association; something is also objectively transmitted.

The Bible itself is a material vehicle. So is the spoken word. So is prayer; so is worship. So is music; so is all art. The prophets of old spoke through material bodies, and a Higher Power spoke through them. Our Lord used a material body. Naaman was to be cured of his leprosy by dipping seven times in the Jordan.

The truth is that God does make use of material intermediaries in order to communicate to us the gifts of the Spirit. He must needs do so, unless their contact with us is to be purely at the level of our Spirits—at which level the most of us enjoy as yet no developed self-consciousness. Religion has to help man at all levels of his being. It works to unify our consciousness and bring us back (Lat. *religare* = to bind back) to the knowledge of our own hidden divinity. For humanity at the present stage, the physical world is the chief theatre of evolution; it is here that causes are chiefly initiated. We live in the body much as in a prison-house, and it is here in the waking consciousness of this tenement of flesh, that help is most needed. If a power is to be made



effective to physical beings, it must be communicated through a physical object of some sort as vehicle. And a similar correspondence applies to other levels of our being. Hence it is infinitely reasonable that the sacramental powers should be expressed through some outward and visible physical sign or symbol as the lowest extremity of their influence ; acting as the distributing centre of that grace.

We do not want to keep our minds fixed on the mechanical side of the process, but we need not pretend that it does not exist, or that to recognise it is "unspiritual." In practice, the Eucharist is bound to lift us up into "the heavenlies," and the worshipping Church blends itself in thought with the disciples in the Upper Room, as the officiant personates our Blessed Lord.

#### MAGIC

The latest fashion is to decry all this as magic. And in doing so, the disputants take advantage of the fact that a certain dog has rightly or wrongly acquired a bad name. Magic is originally the wisdom of the Magi, and may be a useful thing if rightly understood. The laws of nature are expressions of the Will of God. They are statements of conditions. Science studies the working of these natural laws, and teaches man how to turn them to his service. The current of a river flowing strongly in a certain direction suggests a means of saving energy in transport, as do the principle of the wheel, the steam locomotive, the electric tram or the automobile. But it is not only a question of turning these forces to our service, there is the other side of the process ; namely, the adapting of ourselves to the laws of nature. "Nature is conquered by obedience," is the modern adaptation of a wise remark made by Lord Bacon. The sensible man studies what conditions are favourable and what are unfavourable to any proposed work.

There is an application of all this in religious worship.



Certain lines of work are laid down by following which co-operation with great natural forces is assured. This merely gives greatly increased efficacy to the work, and is in no way whatsoever undesirable, so long as the worshipper does not diminish his own initiative. The traditional ceremonies of religion show evidence of a profound knowledge of human psychology and of the working of these natural laws, which is one evidence of their inspired origin. There is, in fact, a science of the Sacraments ; but unfortunately the re-discovery of this science is only in its infant stage. In primitive times magic is used to replace human effort and initiative. This is not harmful, but is in fact beneficial to the people concerned, so long as they are incapable of that effort. As man grows into his spiritual maturity, he learns to co-operate with nature and uses her art deliberately and consciously. A man is not accused of magic in secular life because he uses an automobile, a telegraph office or the printing press. Why then should he be in the domain of religion ? We are above the level of the prayer-wheel, and we no longer perform rites and incantations to compel the Deity. Rather, we take advantage of what the Divine Wisdom has provided for us. The Divine Life may be contacted everywhere. That is profoundly true. But if our Lord has instituted for us a means of contacting His more direct and immediate Presence, should we not be foolish to refuse it ? There is a sense in which all this is magic. Only let it be understood that there is bad magic and good magic—black magic and white magic—according to whether the process is employed for selfish, personal ends, or for good and beneficent purposes. The intellectual side of this work, the effort to understand and to work purposefully, legitimate as it is, must never be divorced from the ethical and devotional side. Side by side with our offering of intellect, we must offer “ ourselves, our souls and bodies,” as a holy and continual sacrifice to God.

Some Protestants seem to suspect that when a priest believes that by using the Words of Consecration Christ becomes present, he arrogates to himself the idea that he has done it by his own magic. Such an idea is to me incredible. The magic, so far as magic is involved, is Christ's, not that of the priest, and we accept it with all reverence and gratitude.

#### EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

It is obvious that all Christians, no matter what their particular beliefs about the Eucharist may be, have in that Sacrament an ideal which calls out all the devotion and religious feeling of which they are capable. The Zwinglian sees in it a solemn contemplation of our Lord's Passion and redemption of the world, and a token of our common fellowship in His mystical body the Church. The Calvinist, the Receptionist and the believer in the Real Presence, see in it a spiritual feeding upon Christ through faith. Already, however, as between the Zwinglian and the others, there is a slight difference in reaction upon the worshipper due to the difference of belief. One is contemplating the redemption of the world by our Lord, and the deliverance of his soul; the other believes that in some high and mysterious way he is being made to participate in the very being of Christ Himself. The worshipper who looks to a Real Presence brought into effective contact with the whole of his nature, physical, psychical and spiritual, must react differently again and with even greater fervour of being. Let it be granted that the stimulation of the highest part of our spiritual being is the chief factor, there is still the reaction of the inferior part of our being, of that portion of the nature which is most awakened and habituated to strong reaction. The behaviour of this part of ourselves brought into the immediate Presence of our Lord will naturally be different from that of one who holds, let us say, the Receptionist theory. The character of the service and the nature of the cultus must inevitably be



different. And so in actual practice it is. The kind of worship which one sees in a Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Anglo-Catholic Church is quite different from that prevalent in Churches where the beliefs which determine the worship are different. There is naturally a greater sense of realism<sup>1</sup> in Churches where the Real Presence is recognised. Some would perhaps call it literalism—but who would not be intensely realistic in every fibre of his being if he found himself standing in the Presence of our Lord as he might have seen Him in Galilee? It is a belief which has its natural and unescapable consequences, and one does not see how these could logically be avoided even if one wished to avoid them.

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,  
Quae sub his figuris vere latitas.

Luther was not quite consistent on the question of Eucharistic adoration. He said that Christ ascended into heaven for the purpose that we might adore Him there, but that He was not present in the Sacrament for that purpose. His doctrine was that the Presence was *in usu, non extra*; namely, that our Lord instituted the Sacrament for purposes of communion and not otherwise. Christ came to earth in the flesh, he says, not to be adored, but to minister to men, and he draws a parallel with this and His descent into the Sacrament.<sup>2</sup> On this question of adoration his attitude was apologetic, and he pleaded that those who did not adore should not be condemned on that account. He adhered to the custom of elevating Host and Chalice; but later abandoned it, explaining that the act had no inherent significance and that he had wanted not to shock people by hasty innovations.

These views of his sound a little odd to our ears, for we should scarcely suppose that we give adoration to God

<sup>1</sup> "The practice of regarding things in their true nature and dealing with them as they are": Fowler, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vom Anbeten des Sakraments*.



because He requires it of us like some Oriental despot. The position is rather that it is good and natural for us to give that adoration.

On this question the Roman teaching is logical and quite clear.

The Adorableness of the Eucharist is the practical consequence of its permanence. According to a well-known principle of Christology, the same worship of latria (*cultus latriæ*) as is due to the Triune God is due also to the Divine Word, the God-man Christ, and in fact, by reason of the hypostatic union, to the Humanity of Christ and its individual component parts, as, e.g. His Sacred Heart. Now, identically the same Lord Christ is truly present in the Eucharist as is present in heaven; consequently He is to be adored in the Blessed Sacrament and just so long as He remains present under the appearances of bread and wine, namely, from the moment of Transubstantiation to the moment in which the species are decomposed (cf. Council of Trent, Sess. XIII., can. VI.).<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Gore accounts for the fact that Eucharistic adoration was but little developed in the early Church in a very interesting fashion. He quotes Dr. Hort (*Life and Letters of F. J. A. Hort*, Vol. II., p. 50) to show that—

“Jesus-worship,” as a whole—the distinctive feature alike of Protestant evangelicism and Catholic sacramentalism—is not at all prominent in the theology of the first five or six centuries . . . the separate and distinctive worship of Jesus in His manhood, with all the specially tender associations of His human name—the worship which gives its special sentiment to so much mediæval and modern devotion—was but very little developed.

We cannot, moreover, conceal from ourselves that this type of devotion, whether among Catholics or among Protestants, whether in mission hymn-singing or in sacramental worship, has belonged to the emotional and devotional part of our manhood, rather than to the moral and rational.

<sup>1</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopædia*, Vol. V., art. “Eucharist,” p. 581.



He speaks of this as a change in the colour of devotion. It is certainly a change of stress.

We cannot reasonably separate the worship of Jesus in the sacrament from our whole attitude towards Him. If the early Church had been in the constant habit of singing such hymns as "Jesu, Lover of my soul," is it not very likely it would have also sung, "Jesus, I adore Thee on Thy altar throne"?<sup>1</sup>

Humanity does pass through different phases of experience. There are periods when devotion is at the flood-tide in human affairs and other times when intellectualism is predominant. Intuition seems likely to be the phase of the future. Obviously, however, Eucharistic adoration developed partly under the devotional influence of the Middle Ages, but largely owing to the increasing denial of the reality of the Presence, which began at the Reformation. We have a good parallel in the change which was brought about in the discipline of the Sacrament of Penance. It was formerly the custom to make public confession, but this completely altered as conditions changed.

A criticism that is sometimes levelled against Eucharistic adoration is that in concentrating attention so much on Christ in the Blessed Sacrament we are apt to pay insufficient attention to His universal Presence and to that mystical aspect of Christ wherein He is spoken of as reigning in the human heart. It is thought also that there may be a tendency to devote too little attention to the other Persons of the Trinity. This last criticism seems to be met by the fact that the Liturgy of the Eucharist is a constant play upon the inter-relation of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and that prayers are normally addressed to the Father. In fact, *usum non tollit abusus*; it is senseless to say that a thing right in itself should be sacrificed because there is danger of neglecting other things. Rather let us give our attention to

<sup>1</sup> *The Body of Christ*, pp. 106, 107, 109.

those other aspects of truth. The difficulty is really that worship is seldom envisaged as a whole, and in a philosophic sense, as a systematic method of awakening and developing the whole nature of man.

#### IDOLATRY

One curious feature of the modern controversy about the Eucharist is the allegation which is still persisted in that Eucharistic adoration is idolatry. The Bishop of Birmingham made a strange remark last year that the High Churchman, with his Eucharistic adoration, was little removed from the cultured Hindu idolater. The Bishop's harsh and iconoclastic language outraged the susceptibilities of many Christians, and other Anglican Bishops have thought fit publicly to rebuke Dr. Barnes for his want of moderation. But the Hindu might equally be outraged. I have had the good fortune to study Hinduism at first hand in India, and for various periods of time to live in conditions where one was able to mix and associate with Indians without the barriers which usually divide the white and the coloured man. No Hindu of intelligence and education thinks of giving to an idol the worship which is due to Divinity alone. Catholic theology makes the distinction between *latría*, the worship due to God, and *dulia*, the reverence given to creatures because of their closer relationship with God. A lesser veneration may be given to sacred objects.

There may be, indeed there probably are, ignorant peasants who do not stop to think of the difference between the Host and Christ, but even in their case the worship, however primitive, is in effect directed to Christ. Apart from these cases, to suppose that any ordinary person worships the bread and wine is too utterly ridiculous (*pace* the Anglican Black Rubric). It is our Lord Who is worshipped under the species of bread and wine, and that type of adoration is in many cases that I personally know as high and pure and as com-



pletely lacking in grossness as the meditative devotion of any Quaker or mystic who divorces himself (as far as the world in which he lives allows him to do so) from forms and intermediaries. From my knowledge of "cultured Hindu idolaters," I should say exactly the same of them. There is, for example, a Hindu deity named *Ganesha*. He is portrayed with an elephant's trunk. People unfamiliar with India would learn with genuine astonishment of the extraordinary sagacity of which the elephant is capable. *Ganesha* is the representative of wisdom, the attribute of the Second Person of the Hindu Trinity, and the elephant-like form is simply a way of making a homely appeal to a people of agricultural traditions. That such silly charges should be made by bishops and eminent politicians in the twentieth century against either Hindus or their fellow-Christians, shows only how difficult it is even for clever men and women to disencumber themselves of the stupid superstitions and prejudices of the past.

I come back to the thought with which this chapter opened. We are all familiar with what is ordinarily meant by materialism. But materialism is a monster of protean form, and is none the less dangerous in the disguise in which he shows himself in the world of religion. The tendency to "spiritualise" our conceptions of religion by refusing to them any objectivity in this world is nothing but materialism. The denial of the Real Presence is one form of this pseudo-spiritual materialism, which refuses to see the nearness of the spiritual in our midst, and must "locate" it elsewhere.

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE

It will scarcely seem strange that one holding these views should also hold that the Real Presence is not solely a question of faith or philosophical speculation, but can become a matter of realised experience and therefore first-hand knowledge. The higher psychical faculties, the possibility of whose existence is becoming more and more recognised, are powers of the soul. Now it is a common error to suppose that we are only concerned with the life of the soul after the death of the body. In point of fact, man's physical life and soul-life are lived contemporaneously. There is a science called Meditation in the West, and Yoga in the East, by which the higher faculties of man can be cultivated. An intimate friend of mine who lives much in India told me of the case of an Indian judge who made it his practice to meditate on Truth every day for over twenty years. He eventually so sharpened his perception of Truth that he became to a large extent able to tell by some process of direct and intuitive perception when witnesses were prevaricating. They were out of tune. If one accepts the idea that man is essentially Divine in nature, a Spark from the Divine Flame, it follows that he possesses within himself in a latent or potential state all the attributes of Divinity. It is his task, one by one, to unfold and realise those faculties—and the doctrine of Reincarnation provides a key to the method of the process. If, for example, we take a quality like intuition, we find it recognised that some people possess it and others do not. It is regarded as an endowment of birth. On the other hand, it can quite reasonably be maintained that this, like every other human faculty, is patient of cultivation, and can be developed under the requisite conditions. We have,



thus, a theory of human evolution by which man gradually unfolds within himself quality after quality of character, developing his powers of consciousness, and in doing so establishing himself self-consciously and of right as a citizen not only of the physical world but also of the higher worlds or realms of consciousness commonly called spiritual.

Pursuing such exercises of spiritual development, it becomes eventually possible for a person to gain for himself first-hand knowledge on many disputed problems of religion. If he can learn to open the windows of his soul, he can see out into that soul-world, where inhabit those souls who have cast off the physical body. That prayer is effective to help the dead, is therefore one such matter of conscious knowledge. That a change does take place at the Consecration is another. That the ordinary church is like an empty barn in comparison to one where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved is another. That the Presence is not limited to the period of a Communion Service is another. The enormous spiritual blessing that is poured out by our Lord in the rite of Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament is yet another. Scripture and the Traditions of the Church may be, and often are, of priceless value ; but men are poles apart in the way in which they interpret them. And it must be confessed that in most cases the evidence is much too scanty and vague to warrant a clear decision.

Bishop Barnes was perfectly right in saying that spiritual changes wrought by the consecration of the elements should be perceptible to some faculty of spiritual apprehension. But these higher modes of consciousness are difficult to develop, and even more difficult to bring completely under control. Their working tends to be intermittent, and often depends upon the bodily health of their possessor. That they exist is to me a matter of knowledge. It is but reasonable to suppose that as man spiritualises himself, he grows sensitive to spiritual influences from without. As he grows more Christ-like in his character, he gains the power to attune

himself to our Lord and to respond to His influence. A spiritual priest or layman or laywoman ought not to find it difficult to know whether the Real Presence is fact or fancy.

That there are dangers of aberration, of self-delusion, of pride and of other kinds connected with the study and practice of these things, none know better than those who have had most to do with them. The early pioneers of every science have to lay its foundations at much risk to themselves. The fact that this particular science is as yet but imperfectly explored is, however, no reason to deny the existence of the facts on which it is based.

At the beginning of every great religion there are Gnostics or knowers, who know at first hand the truth of that which they teach. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, writes quite plainly of all this. Truly has it been said "Where there is no vision, the people perish."<sup>1</sup> As a Church ceases to produce men of spiritual experience, so do its teachings become narrowed down and hardened, its theology grows legalistic and mechanical, and its priesthood—unable to impart knowledge by process of inner illumination—seeks to impose it by outer authority and persecutes those who resist its will. Spiritual truths are at all times capable of re-verification by spiritually developed men. The ancient Paths of Purification, Illumination and Union are still open for the treading. Those who approach by the traditional path may still hope to attain discipleship. The Way of the Cross of Self-Sacrifice means the progressive unfoldment of the Christ-Spirit within man, and it is to help forward the growth of the Christ in us "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"<sup>2</sup> that the Sacraments of His Church are appointed.

I like to go back in thought to that scene of the Last Supper, the outlines of which we recapitulate in the Prayer of Consecration at each Eucharist. Our Lord had been

<sup>1</sup> *Proverbs* xxix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ephesians* iv. 13.



giving hints to the little band of disciples of the parting was impending, as we learn from the Gospel story. We can picture them gathered together in the upper room and final intimation being given them of the calamity that was to take place. How deep the grief that must have fallen on the thought of the separation, the anxiety, the sense of helplessness, the thought of awful and utter loneliness. Can we not picture His tender sympathy with their distress, and His endeavour to re-hearten them and to inspire them for the work they yet had to accomplish. For the disciple must not think of himself, but of the constant note of the world's great need. And He speaks to them of His love and care for them, of His power that will sustain them and support them in all their difficulties. Presently He tells them of the plan that He has devised for them, a rite that shall incorporate His very being, that shall keep the sense of His living Presence perpetually in their hearts, and shall help them to maintain that realisation of their fellowship with one another, that holy and all-possessing unity which they had gradually found in their common devotion to Him. How wonderful must have been those moments as in solemn thanksgiving He brake that Bread, and as He blessed that Cup. How sweetly tense the peace and stillness of that greatest of all moments. What a panorama in the inner worlds, what hosts of angels and Great Ones to do homage to that memorable occasion ! And above all the sweetness of His love binding them perpetually to Him with ties that should never be broken.

It was not only once in the history of this sad world that so marvellous an experience was given to men. The rite still lives on ; His love still binds men's hearts together, and we take comfort and strength in His marvellous promise, " And lo ! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." <sup>1</sup>

ACCENDAT IN NOBIS DOMINUS IGNEM SUI AMORIS, ET  
FLAMMAM AETERNAE CARITATIS.

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew xxviii. 20.*